

# ***Editorial: Familiar Voices and New Voices from the Many Landscapes of Holistic Education***

**Paul Freedman**

**Robin Ann Martin**

E-mail: dancingmonkey@rockisland.com , martinr7@sou.edu

Received November 2022

Accepted for publication Nov. 2022

Published Dec. 2022

## **Abstract**

In this opening editorial, we move across time from much-esteemed authors who have helped to establish the field over the past four decades to newer authors who are stepping forward and establishing themselves. Overall, the articles provide both macro-views of educational issues within the broader systems that we operate, along with micro-views of new and unique voices emerging from educators and scholars who are finding their way within particular cultures and places. (Paul Freedman and Robin Ann Martin are two members of the editorial team for this open-themed issue of the *Holistic Education Review*.)

**Keywords:** *holistic education, holistic curriculum, voice, perspectives, mindfulness, sustainability, embodied learning, autobiographical narrative, values in education*

---

We, the Editors of the *Holistic Education Review*, are once again humbled and delighted to present to you a stunning collection of scholarship in this field. In this, our fourth issue since the journal's re-launch in this open-access platform, it is clear that we are filling a needed niche within the landscape of educational research and practice. In fact, as our readership grows, we are receiving more and more submissions, and readers will notice that our content in this issue has expanded as well. It is heartening and exciting to us that we continue to publish new work from long-established leaders in the field, as well as research from newer scholars and practitioners. It is an honor to grapple with the fairly awesome responsibility of ever-so-gently guiding what is becoming quite a prodigious snowball down this beautiful hillside.

Volume II, Number 2 is an un-themed issue. We begin with a handful of featured cornerstone articles in which we receive some important context-giving and grounding words from some of the voices that will be most familiar to students of

holistic education. We begin with an article by Ron Miller, "Education for a Postmodern Age." It is fitting that we begin with the visionary editor from the 1988 launch of the original *Holistic Education Review*. Here, we share with you a historic article that first appeared in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of his groundbreaking book *What Are Schools For*. In this piece we see R. Miller step fully into his background as a social historian. He situates the rise of the holistic education movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s within a landscape of multidisciplinary intellectual thought and social criticism. Specifically, Miller references the emergence of postmodernism within academia. He suggests that while French deconstructionists' mission was focused on dismantling established truths, assumptions and a reductionist worldview, *constructive postmodernists* including David Ray Griffin were opening new possibilities that supplanted reductionism with something new. Holistic education emerged into this landscape as an application of constructive postmodernist theory. In the process of this landscaping, R. Miller provides something of a primer on the

historical antecedents which form the foundation upon which holistic education has been built.

Jack Miller published his seminal book, *The Holistic Curriculum* in 1988, the same year the *Holistic Education Review* was launched. This book has been hugely influential to both scholars and school leaders for the past thirty-four years. In this issue, his article, "Schools Inspired by *The Holistic Curriculum*." J. Miller looks directly at the profound influence this book, and its core principles has had on the founding of four currently operating schools, with the possibility of a fifth school's emergence. J. Miller reintroduces us to the key concepts introduced in *The Holistic Curriculum*. That is, that schools could be organized around balance and connection, and the possibility that schools could move beyond the positions of *transmission* and *transaction*, and allow for the possibility of *transformation*. He then takes us on a tour of diverse schools that are doing just that, as they explicitly look to J. Miller's work as their guiding philosophy.

Richard Brady, "Transforming Me to We," is one of the most renowned leaders within the mindfulness movement in education. Brady founded, *Minding Our Lives* and the *Mindfulness in Education Network*, organizations which have influenced the practice of thousands of educators internationally. Here, Brady looks back on his 50+ year career and his journey from classroom math teacher to becoming one of the most influential mindfulness scholars in the world. Using the metaphorical role of the gardener, he reflects on the transformation required from education that is all about *me* to one that focuses on the *we*. He takes us through all the stages of gardening, from planting seeds, cultivating soil, weeding and eventually harvesting the rewards of this transformative journey.

Marni Binder, "Spaces of Belonging: Spiritual Landscapes of Identity" and Tobin Hart, "Embodying the Mind" provide breathtaking examples of how established holistic education scholars continue to apply and deepen their research and scholarship. Binder's gorgeous meandering journey, presented through original poetry, photography and prose, explores the concept of rootedness and what it means to connect to place. She wrestles with living at the intersection of traveler and tourist, as she reflects on the struggle to stay connected with spirit, even while away from home.

Hart explores the pervasive assumption that human maturation through childhood involves a cognitive journey

towards greater and greater abstraction. Hart proposes that this assumption, along with the dominant reductionist worldview has informed our design for schooling. And that, instead we might consider a "4E" approach to cognition, that is cognition that is *enacted, embodied, extended and embedded*. He then provides powerful concrete examples of efforts to re-enchant schooling according to this understanding from around the world.

<><>

In the Peer-Reviewed Submissions of this issue, our authors cover a full range of issues that are both deeply-rooted and emerging in new forms within the field.

Sunnya Khan explores an autobiographical account, or reflexive narrative, of herself as both individual and teacher, as she uses an approach called "Currere" as she examines "complicated conversations" within herself. From a Pakistani upbringing attending an English-medium school, Khan started out early in life trying to assimilate and so explores here what it means to seek "Elusive Validation." Peering initially from Freire's banking concept of education, she then regards the "authentic self through external and internal colonization" and the implications for others in examining their own stories in a decolonized curriculum.

In the next article, two authors from Chinese society, Sn Fai Eric Ng and Tak Wing Man, inquire about how "filial piety" can be viewed to support students' moral development. From the perspective of Chinese culture, the authors creatively consider how the significance of parental love begins in relation with the parents and expands outward. With their supporting research, they weave a discussion of cultural values that spring from a curriculum to increase motivation for junior high school students.

Other evolving issues relate to the intersection of holistic education with sustainability and systems-level thinking. Zooming outward for a bird's eye view, authors Cheek, Tennant, Torti-Feener, and Torti have teamed up in this issue to compose the provocative inquiry entitled, "Empowering Students through a 'Certain Kind' of Education Thirty Years On: An updated response to David Orr's What is Education For?" This article presents a forward-looking analysis, proposing "four new action-oriented pillars" that spin from David Orr's original six, along with a higher-education example that supports all four pillars in a university minor program in "Ecology and Legacy."

On a related set of topics, the next article zooms both inward and outward. Madeline Reynolds, an educator with more than 30 years of experience, finds herself learning anew about key principles of permaculture, biodiversity, and more when she serves in the hands-on role of Community Gardener Assistant. The eloquence of Reynolds's writing is striking.

Another theme emerging in this issue is student governance and leadership. In the article "Does Sociocracy Support Student Voice? Student Perceptions of a Student Council Using Sociocracy in a Public School," Hope Wilder offers an exemplar of holistic qualitative research in this study of the implementation of a sociocratic governance model. The appropriately named New Roots Charter School in Ithaca, New York, has studied and adopted this democratic and student-empowering approach to governance. Wilder shares the stunning results of these efforts.

In our final peer-reviewed paper of this issue, authors Angela Lee and Nayha Acharya explore their subjective narratives from law school. Lee's story examines dissatisfactions that lead to making changes for giving her students more responsibility in discovering self-awareness and their own passions. Acharya's story reviews the importance of creating "spaces that are conducive to non-judgmental expression" and routes for getting there. Together from their two narratives, they pull out three core themes that highlight both challenges and solutions for the field of law, "an inherently conservative field," which may allow for doors of self-discovery and inward looking.

<><>

In our Community Voices section for this issue, two interviews add to the fullness of Volume II, Number 2. Here we celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of Roong Aroon School, a beacon of holistic school practice in Bangkok, Thailand. Editor Paul Freedman engages the school's founder and leader, Prapapat Niyom in a dialogue about the school's birth and growth and how it has mirrored her own pedagogical journey. Niyom engages us with her charming storytelling and endearing examples of holistic education in action.

Editor Robin Martin offers the transcript of a lovely meandering dialogue with her good friend Scott Forbes. Many readers will know Forbes for his book, *Holistic*

*Education: An Analysis of its Ideas and Nature*. Here, these two holistic educators focus discussion on Forbes' years as Head of School at J Krishnamurti's Brockwood Park School, and Forbes's close relationship with "Krishnaji." The dialogue offers insights into Krishnamurti's pedagogy and its embodiment during the early years of this residential school in England.

In addition, a third short article in Community Voices by Jacob Goodwin gives a critique of online civics programs, along with an overview of peace education as a foundation for building civic competence through communal dialogue.

Also in our Community Voices section, readers will find a few highlights from two conferences in 2021 and 2022. In the autumn of 2021, the third international Holistic Teaching and Learning Conference was held via Zoom, hosted by Southern Oregon University. Three presenters share some of their insights and unfolding knowledge as highlighted from their presentations. We conclude this Vol. 2(2) issue with the Alternative Education Resource Education Conference presentation that commemorated Brent Cameron, along with a summary of other AERO presentations as well.

The final section of this issue is book reviews. We showcase two book reviews of *Taoism, Teaching, and Learning: A Nature-Based Approach to Education* (2022) by John P. Miller and *The Future of Smart* (2021) by Ulcca Joshi Hansen. Both of these book reviews provide thorough and thoughtful perspectives.

<><>

The next issue of the Holistic Education Review will be published in late spring of 2023, with a theme encompassing indigenous education and education from a kinship worldview. We invite you to submit articles for that issue or the fall 2023 issue around the theme of contemplative practice. To submit new articles for peer review in our journal, please visit our journal web site, clicking on the "For Authors" link in the right column:

<https://journals.publicknowledgeproject.org/default3/index.php/her>